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A D D R E S S

DELIVERED AT THE

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

OF THE

INCORPORATION OF NEW BOSTON,

NEW HAMPSHIRE,

J U L Y 4, 1 8 6 3,

BY CLARK B. COCHRANE.

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ALBANY, N. Y.:
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A D D R E S S .

There is a sentiment in the human heart answering to the summons which brings us to this feast of memory. We gather at this centre of interest and friendship, from distant homes and varied lines of life, in obedience to a common instinct of our nature. Attachment to the place of birth, the scenes of childhood, the home of kindred and the burial grounds of our fathers, springs from an affection inherent in our humanity. As the exhausted tides, by an irresistible law of nature, roll back to their ocean home, so through their deepest channels the warm and wearied currents of the soul return to the associations, the play-grounds, the companions of early years. When the patriarch Joseph, looking to the promised Exodus, though wearing the second honors of Egypt, gave his brethren "commandment concerning his bones," he did but express a desire instinctive and common to mankind under all conditions and in every age.

"Breathes there the man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned,
From wandering on a foreign strand!"

You, who have continued to occupy the old domain and inherit the paternal soil, have never felt and therefore cannot appreciate the power of those ties which link the heart of the emigrant to the home of his youth. It is recorded of Abraham as a test of eminent faith, that when the command came "get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house," he "departed as the Lord had spoken." It is the wanderer whose dreams are of the "fireside afar." 'Tis in the land of strangers, remote from former friends, away from all that had been loved and left behind, in the distant pursuits of fortune or fame, and amid the perplexities of trade, the exhaustion of mind, the disappointments, toils and tumults of hurried life, that our thoughts dwell in the past and our weary spirits pant for the green fields of youth, and the spring time of life.

With us, from whom the bloom and blessings of young existence, have long since departed, the memory of its scenes, the attachments it formed, the places it loved, and the objects it cherished, retain a freshness and power which years and absence serve only to increase.

"Time but the impression deeper makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear."

As the dreary winds and falling leaves of autumn, force a sigh for the balmy air and vernal glories of the opening year, so the weariness and burdens of ripening age, drive our thoughts back to the sunny season of youth and hope, when exempt from cares and sheltered by a mother's love, the present had no sorrows, and to the eye of young ambition, the future no clouds.

"Who has not felt how growing use endears,
The fond remembrance of our former years;
Who has not sighed when doomed to leave at last,
The hopes of youth, the habits of the past,

The thousand ties and interests that impart
 A second nature to the human heart,
 And wreathing round it close, like tendrils climb,
 Blooming with age and sanctified by time."

The present is an opportunity long wished for—at length enjoyed. We are here for no purpose of gain or ambition, to inaugurate no enterprise which might hold out to the greedy eye of capital promised returns of wealth and power, we come to contend for none of those glittering but delusive prizes which tempt the feet of this world's votaries to the arena of discord and strife. Far different is our mission—ours is a pilgrimage of the heart—an errand of friendship—the presentation of a united social offering to the homes and the days of "Lang Syne." The selfish passions of the soul are left behind, and all its nobler impulses, all its kindlier sensibilities are called into highest activity.

It would be difficult to imagine an occasion which, for us, could possess greater interest.

New Boston, our native town, the home we loved and left, has made a banquet for her absent children, and we are here. Driving along the distant avenues and dusty ways of life, we heard the mother's call, and we have hurried home to partake of her hospitality and receive her grateful welcome.

Fellow townsmen, neighbors, kinsmen, friends, we thank you for this public expression of your kind remembrance, for this most generous greeting, this grand and affectionate reception—for this "feast of reason and flow of soul." The table which you have with so much liberality spread before us, is wanting in no luxury which may tempt the social appetite. Decked and perfumed with the choicest flowers of memory, sparkling with nectar which the gods yield only to the lips of earliest and truest friendships, and twined with evergreens connecting the present with a

cherished past, we approach it as the one entertainment, the crowning festival of our lives.

After long years of separation and varied vicissitudes, we meet again at the place from whence we went out. We parted as friends, as friends we meet; we left in the bloom of life and hope, we return faded by time and worn by cares. Our several ways have led us in widely divergent lines. Our lots have been cast in places remote from you and from each other. But neither absence or distance, prosperity or adversity, successes or disappointments have served to wean our hearts from the friends and firesides we left behind, or make us forget the woods and the streams, the hills and the valleys, the rocks and the glens with which we communed when life was new. From the western prairies, from the shores of the great lakes, from the valley of the Hudson, from the commercial metropolis of the continent, from the cities and villages of the Atlantic seaboard, from the manufacturing towns and along the rivers and among the mountains of our own New England, animated with one spirit and impelled by a single impulse, we have hastened to join this reunion of kindred hearts and here, at the common source of our several life-streams, once more drink together at the pure fountains of childhood, and renew our strength for what remains of life's battle amid the bracing air and among the bracing friends of our rocky home.

The circumstances under which we are réassembled are peculiarly happy in their combination, and are such as can rarely occur in the history of any local community. The day, the year, the preparation, the gathering, the scene, all unite in crowding within the limits of a few passing hours the highest social pleasures, the most hallowed recollections of a life time.

It is, indeed, a genial and joyous occasion—a grateful halting place by the wayside of life—a green spot to which

we gladly turn aside from the heated and bustling ways over which we are driven along, to pass a brief season in fraternal salutations, in happy greetings, in pleasant and cheerful intercourse, to meet old friends and revive former friendships, to recall the innocent sports, the delightful scenes, the genial memories of early years ; to inquire of you and of each other how it has fared with us during these many years of separation ; what joys, what sorrows, what successes, what reverses, what lights and what shadows have checkered life.

As the present is a time for gladness, so also it is a time for retrospect and gratitude, as well. We rejoice at the multiplied evidences of your prosperity—that the ancient character of the old town for industry, enterprise, hospitality and intelligence has sustained no detriment at your hands. If you have received from us a less revenue of honor and credit than you had reason to expect, you can not justly reproach us with having brought upon the names we bear or the lineage we claim, the taint of disgrace or dishonor. Between you who have remained and us who have returned let there be the full flow of fraternal fellowship and generous gratulations, chastened by a grateful sense that whatever of good fortune has attended either, is due to that benignant Being, who “tempers the winds to the shorn lamb,” and who, of all true, good and right living, is at once “The friend, inspirer, guardian and reward.”

Since coming among you, we have not failed to make the most of time and opportunity—we have lived youth over again. Leaving age and cares, we have gone back into the past. We have reveled in a full harvest of familiar scenes and animating recollections.

The earth and air are fragrant with childhood memories. The noise of rural industry, the lowing of herds, the murmur of streams, the hum of bees, the varied song of birds, the drum of the partridge and the voice of the whippowill,

sounds which mingled with life's earliest dreams, have been again heard among our native hills. We have stood and gazed upward, once more, full in the face of old Jo. English, whose stately form and solemn features impressed our infant thoughts, and whose rugged ascent and airy summit first tempted the ambitious adventures of our boyhood. We have again followed the famous Piscataquog, still winding its resolute way through the heart of the old township, reminding us, at every turn, of "home and friends and that sweet time," when, boys together, we listened to its music, bathed in its waters and played along its banks. Nor have we forgotten the Meeting House Common or the sandy slope in front of the Hall, where, on training days, the New Boston Artillery, now an institution of the past, with measured tread, martial airs and nodding plumes was accustomed to parade, taking captive our eager hearts and stirring our young spirits to envy and admiration. We have again labored up the sides of the old "hill pastures," on every square rod of which, when boys at home, we had brushed the dew with our bare and battered feet, and amid whose endless perplexities of heap and hollow, rock, stub, thistle, bush, brake and fern, in hunting the cattle, or attempting to head off some antic horse or provoking steer, our young tempers had been subjected to sorest trial. We have been to the school house to see once more the oft-remembered grounds, where with merry voices we had so often gamed and frolicked, when "playful children just let loose from school;"—to the gray church yard, through whose solemn gateway, during these long years of absence, have been borne, one after another, the remains of those whom, in life, we had known and loved, to mingle with the kindred dust of three generations of our forefathers;—have gazed upon the same sky which bent over us in infancy, still floating the summer clouds, in whose fleeting shadows, emblems of human life and

glory, we accept in age the lessons rejected in youth. Have mused where once we played, light of heart, beside the "story telling glens and founts and brooks." Have looked out upon the same grand old woods:—upon the fields smiling in the same variegated garniture;—upon

"The orchard, the meadow, the deep tangled wild wood,
And every loved spot that our infancy knew."

"The wide spreading pond and the mill that stood by it,
The bridge and the rock where the cataract fell,
The cot of our father, the dairy house by it,
And e'en the rude bucket that hung in the well."

Turning from "all the landscape smiling near," familiar objects still remain, to which distance lends enchantment.

Within the ample circle marked by the horizon—the grand and diversified panorama, the first, upon which we lifted our eyes—there's no feature we do not recognize—not a picture, not a group we do not recall—familiar friends, old acquaintances all. Yonder, unchanged by time, the Uncanoonucks, sisters of one birth, still lifting their graceful forms to the clouds, stand as when we first beheld them, the same faithful sentinels at the gates of the morning. From the stormy north old Kearsarge, guarding the approaches to the enchanted regions of the White Hills, heaves as of the old his huge and granite shoulders high in air. Towards the quarter whence cometh the summer shower, the same lofty pile still arrests the eye, as when driving our father's team afield, we saw the thunder cloud break and recoil from the assault upon his forked summit. Standing out against the evening sky is seen the same mellow outline of hills behind which, when we were young, the sun, as now, went down to rest, drawing after him the same unfading curtains of purple and gold; while away in the hazy distance beyond grand Monadnock towering upward in silent and solitary grandeur, bares, as

of yore, his undaunted and imperial head to the bolting artillery of the skies. To the south the green slopes and wooded ridges of Mount Vernon, the plains of Amherst, the pine forests of Merrimack, now as formerly, sleep in peaceful repose and blending with the less distinct landscape beyond, form a picture of rare and quiet beauty as it stretches outward and onward towards the sea.

“ O, nature, how in every charm supreme,
Whose votaries feast on raptures ever new,
O, for the voice and fire of Seraphim,
To sing thy glories with devotion due.”

Such are the external scenes and surroundings from which the sons and daughters of New Boston drew their early inspiration, and under the influences of which were shaped and tempered the elements of their growth and character. Nature rarely fails to impress something of her own features upon the children whom she nourishes upon her bosom.

Where the earth rises to meet the heavens, where cataracts foam and the waters leap, where, above the herds that graze, and the fields that bloom in the valleys below, the eagle wheels to his home in the cliffs, 'tis there, other conditions being equal, that the soul most surely “looks up through nature to nature's God;—that the seed of liberty and virtue take readiest and firmest root, and the abodes of men are safest from violence and plunder.

“ Nature, we owe thee much if we have felt
Aught of the firm resolve or wish sublime,
'Tis that we drank from thee the heavenly draught,
And gave thy moral image to the world.”

Peculiarly gratifying as are the circumstances under which we meet—though fraught with so much of traditional interest and social inspiration, the occasion is not free from suggestions of sadness. Of those, who have gone out

from among you within the memory of the present generation a part only have returned. Some who had hoped to mingle in our festivities have been providentially prevented. Others whose address was unknown or uncertain have failed of notice. Many, very many, have passed beyond the call of earthly friendships. As well among us who left as you who remained, death has done its inevitable work. Since last we met, who of us all has not lost a friend? Of all the family circles to which we claim kindred, what one has remained unbroken? Some have passed away in the bright morning of hope and promise, others have fallen in the strength and noon of life and labor—in the case of a few, the silver cord has remained unloosed until the eye became dim and the grasshopper a burden.

How few of the fathers and mothers who bowed at these altars and worshiped in this mountain, when we were young, are here to greet us to-day!

It is not our purpose to obtrude upon the pleasures of this festive season, the memory of private griefs or individual sorrow, of which we have all had our allotted share, or say aught that might open those heart-wounds over which time has passed his kind and healing hand. But there is one bereavement in which we all equally share, a public sorrows for the loss of one in whom, while living, we found a common friend and father, which forces itself upon our attention, and claims from the passing hour a tribute of filial recognition. To this our social jubilee the charm of his presence is wanting. We miss his genial smile, the cordial grasp of his hand, his words of affectionate welcome, his parental benediction. Assembled to mark an era and commemorate so much that is local and interesting in our history as a community, it is impossible not to recur to the name of one, whose memory, fragrant with a thousand grateful recollections, looks out upon us from

every whispering tree and ancient pathway like a living presence, reminding us of the plastic and moulding genius, that seized upon the elements of youthful character and gave them the touch and tone of virtuous manhood and womanly grace, evolving fresh vigor as the years have waned. For a period of forty years, embracing two-fifths of the century now closing, he moved among his people their acknowledged head, teacher and guide, a living exemplar of whatever is pure and excellent in moral and Christian living. To advance your social prosperity, your educational interests and secure the present and eternal well-being of yourselves and your children, was the unselfish burden of his heart, the labor of his life. Faithful to every duty, public and private, failing in attention to no class or condition, with a wise reference to the great truth in the economy of growth, that upon the seed time depends the future harvest; he took especial interest in the training and education of the young. How vividly do we recall his periodical visitations to the district schools—regularly occurring at the beginning and again at the close of each term; they were the events of our school-day years; with what anxious carefulness of preparation, with what lively emotions of anticipated pleasure we awaited his coming. The young eyes turning, in spite of rules, a sly glance through the window, lighted up with new animation as they saw his approach—expectation stood on tiptoe as the well known knock was heard at the door, and the whole school rose to welcome with the affectionate homage of their obeisance the advent of a recognized benefactor and friend. No merited praise was withheld, and criticism, when required, was administered with wisdom and charity. He brought a kind word for all—assurance of reward for the diligent, encouragement for the backward, hope for the timid, a sure return of happiness for the good, and to the young aspirations of those of brightest promise, though clad

in homeliest garb, were held up the attractive awards of future eminence and success. The performance of his parochial duties was without partiality. In visiting the homes of the more affluent he passed not by the dwellings of the poor. In both he was equally at home and equally welcome. His words always fitly spoken were as "apples of gold in pictures of silver" and "as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies." When the ear heard him then it blessed him, and when the eye saw him it gave witness to him.

Unto him men gave ear, and, waited, and kept silence at his counsel. They waited for him as for the rain, and they opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain.

In the house of gladness his presence and chastened vivacity seemed but to lighten every innocent pleasure, and to the house of sickness and mourning he hastened to bear from his Master, precious words of mercy and consolation, — words which few knew so well how to administer.

"At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
And fools who came to scoff, remained to pray."

Possessed of a mind richly endowed by nature and cultivation, of conversational powers of rarest fascination, added to a presence, at once agreeable and commanding, he took rank from the first among the most gifted and intellectual of his cotemporaries. Though eminently qualified for success in situations affording broader range for intellectual activity and display, he was content to complete the measure of his life and ministry in the less ambitious field to which he was first called, and, at last, he laid to rest among the people to whom his youthful strength, and his earliest and only vows were given.

Venerable man! "none knew him but to love him, none named him but to praise," — and so long as the Christian

faith shall preserve this tabernacle and here maintain an altar, the name of EPHRAIM PUTNAM BRADFORD, shall live in the affectionate memory of men.

We have met, fellow townsmen, for a historic as well as social purpose—to chronicle events while we glean in the field of recollection—to pause in the rapid round of years, review the past and make a record—to witness the closing scenes of a dying century, and raise a monument and trace upon it a brief inscription to its memory. Though the range of immediate inquiry is narrow and special, the task of its examination which we propose to ourselves on this occasion, is not devoid of general interest. The records of states and nations are made up from local and partial annals. From out just such materials as the threads and fragments, which the people of New Boston this day “rescue from the common decay,” the historic muse weaves with cunning hand the variegated web of the ages.

The events connected with the first settlement of New Boston about the year 1733, and its incorporation thirty years later by the provincial government of New Hampshire, carry us back to an age in which the great thought of separate nationality had not been conceived, and far into the colonial period of American history, to a time when our judges sat in the ermine of Westminster Hall, and governors and magistrates ruled by commissions from the crown, when men were yet strong who had triumphed with Marlborough at Blenheim and Ramillies, and our martial ancestors celebrated in scarlet uniforms the imperishable anniversaries in the calendar of British glory—to a period before the French empire in America had been dissolved in the shock of battle on the plains of Abraham, or the brave Scottish clans who welcomed Charles Edward to the Highlands, had seen the last hope of the house of Stuart perish on the field of Culloden.

Men and generations pass away, but society and the race

continue, and the cause of human progress and civilization, events and their logic, march steadily forward. Youth is renewed at the grave of age, and over the ruins of universal death new and better forms of life perpetually spring.

Our origin as a community is involved in no obscurity. It is traceable in plain history, not in uncertain fable. In nationality, it was Scotch; in Christianity, Protestant; in theology, Calvinistic; in sect, Presbyterian. We trace the the well marked line of descent and emigration backward, first to Londonderry, New Hampshire, thence to the counties of Londonderry and Antrim, in the north of Ireland, and from thence to Argyleshire and Ayrshire, its source, in the west of Scotland.

Than ours, few communities can claim a worthier genealogy or trace a nobler ancestral record. Though compelled to force subsistence from a reluctant soil, though inhabiting a land encircled by wintry seas, piled with mountains, roaring with torrents and wrapt in storms, the Scottish race have achieved results and attained a rank which have challenged the respect and admiration of the world. From external fortune was fashioned the interior character, and both were of iron. Emerging in advance of most of the countries of Europe, from out the barbarism of the middle ages, Scotland has continued for more than seven centuries a historic and civilizing power among the nations of the earth. Like her national "thistle," blooming for her friends and bristling to her enemies, in every period of her history, she has been true to her motto,

"Nemo me impune lacessit."

As the "ever green pine" of Clan Alpine, moored in the "rifted rock proof to the tempest shock," she still abides in immortal youth, with eye undimmed and strength unabated, bearing "length of days in her right hand, and in her left hand, riches and honor." In literature, science

and philosophy, notwithstanding her comparatively small population, the array of brilliant names she has given to the world is excelled by no country, ancient or modern.

From the Tweed to the Orkneys, and from the frith of Tay to Loch Shiel, there is no rood of ground which the pen of her gifted sons has not made classical. The yearly pilgrimages made by poets, scholars and tourists to the various objects of natural grandeur and beauty with which Scotland abounds, are but the homage which taste and learning annually pay to the genius of Burns, of Scott, of Wilson and Macaulay, who, in deathless song and matchless prose have invested the estuaries and lochs, the mountains and glens, the banks and braes, the "heathy moors and winding vales" of our fatherland with life and enchantment. Katrine and Loch Lomond, Benvenue and Benan, the "Sweeping Nith," and "Bonny Doon," glowing afar in the attractions of romance, will carry down to remotest time the names which have made them immortal.

The rigors of climate, the severities of labor, the protracted conflicts to which they have been subjected, and through which as well as over which they have triumphed, joined to native force of intellect and a stern Christian faith, have given character to the Scotch and enabled them to exhibit, in every condition and under all vicissitudes of fortune, those combined qualities of valor, energy, intelligence, constancy and self-command which create success and exempt nations and individuals alike from the possibilities of failure. It need therefore excite no surprise that the inhospitable shores, the bleak mountains, the rocky soil and the rugged primeval forests of New England had no terrors for and presented no obstacles to our hardy ancestors. They came to their work of settlement and empire with fearless hearts and resolute hands, trusting alone in the favor of Heaven and their own strong arms for success.

Upon the death of Elizabeth, in 1603, James the 1st of England and 6th of Scotland succeeded to the British throne. During the early period of his reign, he directed his attention to the improvement and reformation of Ireland. The cruel and barbarous customs, which had prevailed among the aboriginal inhabitants, were abolished, and the English laws, with courts for their administration, were substituted in their stead. Upon the suppression of a revolt, which had been raised against his authority, the insurrectionary district, embracing the province of Ulster, by attainder of the rebel chiefs, reverted to the crown. Liberal grants of the forfeited lands were made to companies formed in London, in aid of the royal scheme of securing the permanent pacification of the insurgent district by the introduction of emigrants from England and Scotland. Under the encouraging auspices of the crown, the process of colonization went rapidly forward. Industry and the arts went with the colonists. The effect produced by the introduction of the new element among the native material soon vindicated the wisdom of the enterprise. Violence and crime diminished, and the country began at once to assume the appearance of comparative order and civilization. The rebellion had left the ancient city of Derry in ruins. With a view to its reconstruction, the site upon which it had stood, together with six thousand acres of adjacent lands, were granted to the city of London in its corporate capacity, whence the old city and county of Derry received the name of Londonderry. Emigrants from Scotland, companies of whom began to arrive as early as 1612, settled in the counties of Londonderry and Antrim, which thus became for a long and eventful period, the home of our ancestors. During the three following reigns and including the period of the commonwealth, the colonists in Ireland continued to receive, from time to time, large accessions to their num-

bers from among their kindred and countrymen from England and Scotland. So that, at the commencement of the memorable struggle of 1688, which resulted in the complete dethronement of James the Second, and his final expulsion from the British Islands, the Protestants of Ulster had become, not indeed numerically, but by reason of superior energy, skill and intelligence, the dominant and controlling class in the north of Ireland. Throughout that renowned contest of arms, their zeal, endurance and intrepidity have never been surpassed. To their long and heroic defense of Londonderry, by which the French and Irish army was for months baffled and delayed, and before which it finally rolled back over the line of its advance, broken and demoralized, the cause of freedom and Christian civilization is in no small degree indebted for the success of that most auspicious and happy of revolutions which brought William of Orange and Mary to the throne.

Subsequent to this event and a little less than thirty years thereafter, one hundred and twenty families of Scotch descent, from the counties before mentioned, among whom were many who had witnessed and some who had participated in the memorable siege, prompted chiefly by the hope of securing a larger measure of civil and religious liberty, prepared to bid a final adieu to the old world and try their fortune in the new.

They left the shores of Ireland in five ships, and arrived at Boston, Aug. 4th, 1718. Sixteen of these families having obtained, from the authorities of Massachusetts, leave to locate upon any of the unappropriated lands under the jurisdiction of that province, a township of twelve miles square, proceeded, during the autumn, to Casco Bay, with the design of settling in the neighborhood of what is now Portland; if, upon view, a satisfactory location should be found. The expedition proved unsuccessful. After pass-

ing, in the harbor of Falmouth, a winter of unusual severity, through which they were subjected to extreme suffering, both from cold and hunger, they started upon their return on the first opening of spring, and coasting westward, entered the mouth of the Merrimack, and ascending it to the head of navigation, landed at Haverhill, then a frontier town, on the 2d of April, 1719. At this place, flattering representations were made to them of a tract of country lying but a few miles northerly, to which, by reason of the abundance and variety of nuts found there, had been given the name of Nutfield. Thither the impatient adventurers, without delay, bent their weary but still resolute steps, and on the 11th of April, rested upon the soil of our then future Londonderry. It was the time of spring. Nature, throughout all her myriad arteries, was throbbing with the tides of returning life. The wild grass was springing in the narrow glades and along the margin of the streams, the forests of sturdy growth, swelling with preparation, were just ready to burst into verdure — and every living thing that had a voice joined in a general chorus of welcome to the vernal year. It was the season of hope, and the scene was one of gladness. Here the little company of emigrants, weak in numbers but strong in spirit, at once determined to locate their grant and build their homes. Committing themselves and their infant enterprise to the keeping of that Being in whom they reverently trusted, they went to the work assigned them with a faith that never faltered and with hands that never tired.

Had the acquisition of fame been the end at which they aimed, their aspirations must have been fully satisfied could they have seen the distinguished position they were destined to occupy in the domain of history. But such was not the ambition which led them on.

“ Not as the conqueror comes
 They, the true hearted came ;
 Not with the roll of the stirring drums
 And the trumpet that sings of fame.

Not as the flying come
 In silence, and in fear :
 They shook the depths of the forest gloom
 With their hymns of lofty cheer.

* * * * *

What sought they thus afar ?
 Bright jewels of the mine ?
 The wealth of seas ! the spoils of war ?
 They sought a faith's pure shrine.

Ay, call it holy ground—
 The soil where first they trod !
 They have left unstained what there they found—
 Freedom to worship God.”

Then and there were laid the foundations of a community which was destined to act a most important and distinguished part in the future settlement, growth and triumphs of New Hampshire. Prosperity attended this colony from the beginning. The tomahawk and torch of the savage by which so many neighboring settlements had been surprised and desolated, came not near its borders. The pestilence which had wasted so many colonies, averted its breath from this. For nearly or quite a half century accessions were almost yearly made to its strength and numbers from the ranks of newly arrived emigrants of like faith and blood. The history of this community, from its inception, was one of uninterrupted growth and success. It proved a fountain from which, as well as into which, streams of emigration flowed. It is estimated that there are now living more than twenty-five thousand persons, some of whom are to be found in almost every town of New England and not a few beyond its borders, who

derived their origin from this people. Windham and Londonderry, Vt. : Cherry Valley, N. Y. : Windham, N. H. : Aworth, Chester, Manchester, Bedford, New Boston, Antrim, Peterborough, Francestown, Goffestown, Cole-rain, Heniker and Deering were first settled, all of them largely, and several of them, including New Boston, almost entirely by emigrants from Londonderry. Of New Boston, it may be said more emphatically than of any other town, she was the child of Londonderry.

Many other settlements received early and important accessions from the same source, and notwithstanding these heavy drafts upon her population, the mother township numbered within her own borders, in 1775, two thousand five hundred and ninety souls.

Having thus briefly traced the history of the colony by whose sturdy sons and sterling daughters our own town was founded and its character and institutions formed, it only remains to be added, that no community within the limits of New Hampshire has exerted a wider or happier influence in shaping the destinies and advancing the honor of the state than Londonderry.

Throughout the struggle of the revolution no town displayed greater unanimity, constancy and zeal for the patriot cause, or made larger contributions of men and means to secure its success. Thornton, Stark, Reid, Gregg and McCleary are of the men she gave to the cause and the country,—names which have shed imperishable lustre upon the annals of the states and abide forever in the gratitude of a free people.

THE GRANT.

New Boston was granted, January 14th, 1736, by “the Great and General Court or Assembly, for His Majesty’s province of Massachusetts Bay,” to John Simpson and fifty-two others, inhabitants of Boston. The name New Boston,

which was suggested from the residence of the grantees, was first applied to the township by the proprietors on the 16th of April, 1751, in a call for a meeting, as follows: "The proprietors of a township granted to John Simpson and others, and lying on the branches of Piscataquog river, known by the name of New Boston, are hereby notified," &c.

The proprietors held their first meeting April 21st, 1736, "at the house of Luke Vardy," Boston.

In the records of their proceedings from 1736 to 1751, the township is variously designated, sometimes as "the township granted to John Simpson and others," sometimes as "the township lying on the branches of the Piscataquog river, bounded on two of the Narraganset towns, viz.: No. 3 and No. 5." (Amherst and Bedford), and again as "the new township lying on the south and middle branches of the Piscataquog river."

The grant was of "a township in the unappropriated lands of the province, of the contents of six miles square, with one thousand acres added for ponds," and two rods in each hundred "for unevenness of surface and swagg of chain." In pursuance of authority contained in the act the grant was located in February, 1736 (new style), by a survey made by Jonathan Cummings, surveyor, and Zachens Lovewell and James Cummings, chainmen, appointed and sworn for that purpose, and as thus located the grant was confirmed the 20th of the following March.

For a part of the distance on two sides, the survey bounded the township by Amherst and Bedford, then known as the Narraganset towns, numbers 3 and 5. The rest of the way the line was run through "province lands" by courses and monuments. The lines then established remain the present boundaries of the town.

In 1746, an event occurred which occasioned no inconsiderable alarm, not only to the proprietors of New Boston,

but on the part of land owners throughout the province, as well, who held their grants under the government of Massachusetts. The claim put forth by the Masons to the soil of New Hampshire, and from time to time pressed with great pertinacity and various success, had long been a prolific source of litigation and embarrassment. Doubts, which had thus been cast upon the tenure by which lands were held, had necessarily tended to retard the growth and settlement of the towns. In the year last mentioned, John Tuf-ton Mason, the heir of Capt. John Mason, the original grantee of the province, for the consideration of 1500 pounds, sold and conveyed his title to Mark H. Wentworth, Theodore Atkinson, John Wentworth (son of Benning Wentworth, then governor) and nine others, residents of Portsmouth. These twelve persons were afterwards known as the "Masonian proprietors." The high standing of these gentlemen, their intimate relations to the royal government, and the uncertainty which, at first, prevailed in reference to their purposes, greatly excited and disturbed the public mind. These apprehensions, however, were soon dispelled.

The course taken by the Masonian proprietors allayed all serious disquietude and was at once liberal and enlightened. They proceeded immediately to release their claims to all towns previously granted by Massachusetts, east of the Merrimack, and a few years later quit-claimed all similar grants west of that river.

The union of New Hampshire with Massachusetts, having been dissolved five years before (1741) their title to the unappropriated lands was acknowledged, and of these lands grants were made upon just and reasonable terms. Thus was rapidly and fortunately settled the long and vexed controversy, and the title of the grantees to their grants and the settlers to their homes, became finally and satisfactorily quieted.

In May, 1751, the New Boston proprietors appointed a committee, consisting of John Hill, Robert Boyce and James Halsey, to confer with the Masonian proprietors in reference to their "claims if any they made to the township." In August of the same year, Col. Joseph Blanchard was appointed a committee with power on the part of the claimants. The two committees met at Dunstable, at the residence of Col. Blanchard, and such proceedings were had and concluded, that afterwards, and in December following (1851), the Masonian proprietors conveyed to the proprietors of New Boston the original township, and in addition thereto, by the same conveyance, made a further grant of six square miles, being an oblong tract four miles long by one mile and a half wide, extending from north to south along the west bounds of the original township and down to the Salem-Canada or Lyndsborough line. In the subsequent proceedings of the proprietors, this new grant was referred to as the "new addition," or "new additional land," and became known in the local history of the times as the "New Boston addition." From this addition, and a part of Society land, Francetown was erected and incorporated in 1772, thus reducing New Boston to its original boundaries.

It was made one of the conditions of the original grant that the town should be laid out "into sixty-three equal shares, one of which to be for the first settled minister, one for the ministry and one for the schools." This would give to each share or lot about four hundred acres. Though, for greater convenience, the Massachusetts grant was divided into lots of 150 acres each, and the new addition into lots of 100 acres, the condition, imposed and accepted, was faithfully fulfilled, and the required quantity of land set apart and sacredly devoted to each of the objects specified.

In this connection let it be remembered once for all, that whenever and wherever the pioneers of New England went to open up the forests and cast in their lot, they carried with them, as the grand agencies in the work of settlement and civilization, the Christian church and the common school. These instrumentalities lose none of their importance by change of condition or lapse of time. They are continuing and unalterable necessities. And here and now, as the last sands of a century fall and disappear, and speaking for the first and doubtless for the last time to the people among whom we were reared and for whom affectionate memories have been retained, we pause to declare, as the result of our deepest convictions, that neither yourselves nor those who shall come after you, have any sure promise for the life that now is or the life which is to come, except as you and they shall value and cherish these twin institutions of grace and knowledge left by our fathers in solemn charge.

THE SETTLEMENT.

In meagre and imperfect notices of New Boston which we find in various gazetteers to which access has been had, and which are little more than mere copies of each other, and traceable doubtless to the same original source of information, it is said that the first settlement was begun about the year 1733. The statement rests upon no sufficient authority. It is possible that some adventurer in quest of game or for purposes of exploration may have found his way here and erected within the limits of the township a temporary cabin, as early as the year indicated, but it is believed that no permanent settlement was begun until several years later. In 1741 New Hampshire was separated finally from Massachusetts, and became an independent province. Benning Wentworth was appointed

governor, which office he continued to hold until 1767, when he was succeeded by his nephew John Wentworth. Upon the organization of the new government in 1741, the New Boston proprietors appointed a committee "to wait upon the government and acquaint them that we are the proprietors of the land by virtue of a grant from Massachusetts, that we are going on to settle the same, and have expended already by way of promoting settlements and improvements over two thousand pounds." From this general statement it would appear that at this date some "small beginnings" had been made, but these are believed to have been very inconsiderable.

The enterprise was one of hardships and difficulty. The forests growths were dense and heavy, the surface broken and hilly, the soil rocky and stern. Surveys and allotments had to be made, roads opened, bridges thrown across the streams and provisions and materials brought long distances by tedious stages over rough and unworked ways; and notwithstanding the proprietors, besides direct donations of land and grants of special privileges, had expended, from time to time, very considerable sums of money in aid of general improvements, and with a view of securing an early settlement, for several years the progress made, seems to have been slow and doubtful. It was not until as late as 1750 that such substantial beginnings had been made as insured the complete success of the enterprise. At this period the tide of Scotch-Irish mind and muscle from Londonderry began to set in, and from thence the growth of New Boston went steadily and rapidly forward, until the town reached its maturity in 1820. The first census of the settlement was taken under the authority of the proprietors in 1756, and is the earliest reliable record to be found. September 24th 1754 the proprietors met at the "Royal Exchange tavern in King street" (now State), Boston, "kept by Capt. Robert Stone," and appoint-

ed Col. John Hill and Robert Jenkins a committee with directions "to view the settlements at New Boston township, and make report of the same to the proprietors."

In the summer of 1756, the committee visited the "settlements," and on the 11th of November of the same year, submitted their report to the proprietors at a meeting called "to receive the report of the committee who have been up to view the settlements in said town, and to dispose of such forfeited rights as the proprietors shall think proper." By this report it appears there were at the time of its date (Sept. 25th, 1756), within the limits of the township, 59 persons, namely, 26 men, 11 women, 9 boys, and 13 girls. There were 215 acres of land cleared, 32 houses completed, 6 frames not enclosed, 2 camp houses and one barn, one saw mill, and "one grain mill and dam complete." Two men had "gone to the war"—one man was sick—one male child and two female children had been born in the town. The following, as well as we have been able to ascertain, are the names of the 26 men, and which are believed to be nearly or quite accurate. Thomas Smith, John Smith, Samuel Smith, James Ferson, John Blair, William Blair, Thomas Cochran, James Cochran, Abraham Cochran, Robert Cochran, Samuel Cochran, William McNeil, John Burns, Andrew Walker, Robert Walker, Isaac Walker, James Hunter, John McAlister, George Christie, Thomas Wilson, James Wilson, James Caldwell, William Gray, Allen Moore, William Moore, and Robert Boyce. The Clarks, the McLaughlins, the McMillens, the Livingstons, the McCollums, the Greggs, the Kelsos, the Campbells, and the Dodges came soon after.

Eleven years later, 1767, by order of Governor Wentworth, the selectmen of the various towns within his jurisdiction were required to make and return during the year, a census of their respective towns. The census made in pursuance of this authority was the first general and com-

plete one taken of the province, and contains many curious and valuable statistics. The returns for New Boston showed the following particulars: unmarried men, between the ages of 16 and 60, 25; married men, between the same ages, 41; boys, 16 and under, 92; men, 60 and above, 6; females, unmarried, 80—married, 47; male slaves, 1; female slaves, 2; widows, 3: total population, 296. Who 44 of these adult males were, may be seen by reference to the list of names appended to the call, presented to the Rev. Solomon Moor, August 25th of the same year. It is an interesting fact, that of the 41 male heads of families in town, nearly all must have united in the call.

At this period (1767,) there were thirty-one towns in the province represented in the house of representatives, which consisted of thirty-one members, and held its sessions at Portsmouth, the seat of the royal government.

A third census was taken at the beginning of the revolution in 1775. It was made after the retirement of the royal government, and under the direction of the provisional convention assembled at Exeter in the spring of that year. This census was also general, extending throughout the province, and was intended, in addition to securing a correct enumeration of the inhabitants, to obtain more accurate information with reference to the temper and defensive resources of the towns. The result for this town was thus given: males under 16, 164; males from 16 to 50, not in the army, 98; males over 50, 27; persons in the army, 20; females of all ages, 256; negroes and slaves for life, 4: total population, 569. It is gratifying to find that New Boston was not behind her sister towns in effective aid to the patriot cause, having furnished, during the first weeks of the war, more than one-sixth of her male population, between the ages of 16 and 50, as recruits to the army.

In 1790, the number of inhabitants in the town had increased to 1,202; in 1800 to 1,491; in 1810 it was 1,619, and in 1820 it reached 1,686. At this period the town attained its greatest population, if not to its highest condition of prosperity. There were within its limits 16 school districts, 14 school houses, 1 tavern, 3 stores, 25 saw mills, 6 grain mills, 2 clothing mills, 2 carding mills, 1 bark mill, and 2 tanneries. In the number of saw mills, New Boston, at that time, exceeded any other town in the state. The river valley and the neighborhood of the lesser streams abounded with pines of clear and lofty growth, and the lumbering business early became an important interest, and was largely and profitably prosecuted for many years.

THE INCORPORATION.

The town was incorporated by the government of New Hampshire, February 18th, 1763. By the charter, which bears the sign manual and additions of "Benning Wentworth, Esq., Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Province of New Hampshire," and "Attested," "Theodore Atkinson, Jun., Sec.," "John Goffe, Esq.," was appointed and directed to call the first town meeting. The meeting was required to be held within twenty days after the date of the charter; the time, place and objects of the meeting to be specified in the notice. The charter contained the farther provision that from and after the first election, "the annual meeting of said town for choice of officers and the management of its affairs, should be held within said town on the first Monday of March in each year." From that day to this, "March meeting" has remained one of the "institutions" of New Boston. In pursuance of the authority delegated, Col. Goffe proceeded at once to execute the duty assigned. The call specified as objects of the meeting: 1st. "To choose all their town

officers for the year ensuing as the law directs. 2nd. To see what money the town will raise to defray the charge of the town and *pay for preaching* to the inhabitants for the year ensuing." The meeting was held in pursuance of the notice, March 10th (1763), at the house of Deacon Thomas Cochran, about a mile easterly of the present business centre of the town. Deacon Cochran was the great grand-father of your worthy townsman, William Cochran, was one of the first settlers, and took a leading and useful part in the early affairs of the town and of the church. The ample homestead, which he founded and left, has continued in the possession of his descendants to the present time.

The record of this first town meeting is as follows:

"*Moderator*, Thomas Cochran.

"*Voted*, Alexander McCollum, *Town Clerk*.

"*Voted*, There shall be five selectmen: Thomas Cochran, James McFerson, Nathaniel Cochran, John McAllister, John Carson, *Selectmen*.

"*Voted*, Thomas Wilson, *Constable*.

"*Voted*, Matthew Caldwell, John Smith, James Wilson, George Christy, Thomas Brown, *Surveyors of Highways*.

"*Voted*, Abraham Cochran, Samuel Nickles, *Tithing Men*.

"*Voted*, William Gray, John Burns, *Hog Recres*.

"*Voted*, John Carson, James Hunter, *Deer Keepers*.

"*Voted*, John Cochran, *Invoice man, or Commissioner of Assessments*.

"*Voted*, That a pound shall be built by the corn mill, and that Deacon Thomas Cochran shall be Pound Master.

"*Voted*, Matthew Caldwell, James Wilson, *Accountants to examine accounts of Selectmen*.

"*Voted*, To raise 100 pounds to defray charges for present year and for preaching."

It will be seen that several of the offices filled at this election, had become, in the new condition of the people, entirely useless. The fact that these time-honored places of dignity were not suffered to remain vacant furnishes an amusing as well as forcible illustration of the power of ancient forms and old institutions to which the minds of men have long been accustomed. The next year the number of selectmen was reduced to three, which has since remained unchanged. The two succeeding "March meetings" — those of 1764 and 1765 — were held at the house of John McLaughlin. That of 1766 was held in the "meeting house." This occurred on the 3d of March, and was the first annual town meeting convened in that building, and indicates about the time of its completion. From this time forward for a period of nearly three quarters of a century, the annual and business meetings of the town continued to be held within its walls, and until the venerable old edifice, hallowed by so many interesting and sacred associations, yielded at last to the innovations of time and disappeared from its place. Those who are curious to learn what became of the quaint old pile, and to know the ample timbers and honest materials of which it was composed, will find the objects of their inquiries artfully disguised under the outward seeming of a modern town house.

In this connection it may not be uninteresting to know something of "John Goffe, Esq.," the person who as already stated appeared here in February, 1763, to aid in organizing the town. His life was an eventful one, and viewed at this distance possesses much of romantic interest. He commenced life as a hunter, and located in Derryfield, at or near the junction of the Colos brook with the Merrimack river. Later in life he removed to Bedford, in whose soil his ashes now rest in honor. In favor with the Wentworths, he was early advanced to places of public

trust. Of deep religious convictions he was accustomed, for want of a licensed ministry, to lead assemblies of the people in public worship. In 1746, he was sent in command of a company of militia to the frontier, against the Indians. As lieutenant colonel commanding a detachment of the New Hampshire regiment, he was at Ticonderoga. At the opening of the campaign of 1757, and in August of the same year, was present at the surrender of Fort William Henry to the French. Promoted to the rank of colonel, at the head of eight hundred men, he joined the campaign which resulted in the conquest of Canada, in 1760. In 1767, he represented Amherst and Bedford in general court. In 1768, was made colonel of the old 9th regiment of New Hampshire militia. He was the first judge of probate of the county of Hillsborough, which office he held from 1771 to 1776. Brave, genial and capable, he was largely trusted and universally beloved. At the breaking out of the revolution, he had become too infirm to take the field, but casting his martial mantle on his son, who wore it not unworthily, he gave his heart and his pen to the cause of his country. Long and honorably associated with the more prominent and stirring events in the early history of the towns bordering on our own, the addition of a passing word to the record of his fame, was not deemed unbecoming the occasion.

During the revolutionary period, if we may judge from the character of her representative men, New Boston was neither indifferent or unfaithful to the cause of independence. In the first provincial congress, as it was called, which met at Exeter, in May, 1775, and over which Matthew Thornton presided, the town was represented by Thomas Wilson. The second congress, which met in December of the same year, resolved itself into two bodies, a council and house of representatives. The first council being chosen by and from the representative body, and

afterwards both branches were elected by the people. The government thus instituted continued during the war and until superseded by the permanent government of New Hampshire, in 1784. The House consisted of eighty-nine members, of which the county of Hillsborough was entitled to seventeen. To this branch of the legislature, New Boston and Francestown united in sending one representative. In 1776, Capt. Benjamin Dodge, of New Boston, was chosen. In 1777 and 1778, Archibald McMillen, of New Boston. For the two following sessions, William Starrett, of Francestown. In 1780, James Caldwell, of New Boston. In a delegated convention which assembled at Concord, in September, 1779, to consider the state of the currency, then an absorbing question, William Livingston sat as representative for the town. It is a matter for congratulation, that, on this occasion of historic interest and review, New Boston may recall with just pride, and after the lapse of more than four-fifths of a century, the character of the men whom she honored and trusted in those years of public anxiety and peril.

CHURCHES AND CHURCH EDIFICES.

The Presbyterian church and society was the first and for a long period, the only religious organization in town. This organization is known to have been as early as 1768, there can be little doubt it was formed some years earlier. The first settled minister was the Rev. Solomon Moor. Mr. Moor was born in Newtown-Limavady, Ireland, in 1736; graduated at the University of Glasgow, 1758; was licensed to preach by the presbytery of Londonderry, Ireland, July 26th, 1762; ordained a "minister at large" in 1766, and soon after sailed for America and arrived at Halifax in October of the same year. Making but a brief stay at the latter place, he proceeded to Boston, where he

delivered his first sermon in America, from the pulpit of the Rev. Mr. Moorhead. The following Sabbath, preached for the Rev. Mr. McGregore, at Londonderry west parish, and in February, 1767, came to New Boston with letters of commendation from the Rev. William Davidson, pastor of the first church in Londonderry. Cordially and gratefully welcomed by the people, he at once commenced among them the work of the ministry, and on the 25th of August following, received an unanimous call to become their pastor. Continuing his labors he held the call under advisement nearly a year, and until July 1st, 1768, when he gave in his acceptance, and the relation of pastor and people was solemnized by his public installation on the 6th of September following.

The relation thus formed continued unbroken until his death, which occurred May 28th, 1803, at the age of sixty-seven. His ministry proved a useful and acceptable one, and embraced a period of thirty-six years. In 1770, Mr. Moor was married to Ann Davidson, daughter of Rev. William Davidson, before mentioned. This estimable lady, whose memory is associated with whatever is grateful in social and Christian charities, found favor in the eyes of the people with whom she had come to cast in her responsible lot, and retained it to the close of life. She survived her husband many years, and widely and respectfully known to old and young as "Madam Moor," lingered among us until within the present generation, receiving from all who approached her the affectionate homage due to her station and virtues. As, at the end of a long summer day the sun retires slowly and calmly to rest through the mild glories of evening, so, full of years of right living, closes the life of the aged good.

At the time of Mr. Moor's settlement he boarded in the family of Mr. Robert White, who lived on the crown of the hill a few rods northeasterly of where Abraham Was-

son now resides. In this connection the town records have this entry :

“ August 15, 1768, Province of New Hampshire.

At a legal meeting of the inhabitants of New Boston.

Voted, Thomas Cochran, *Moderator*.

Voted, Robert White provide entertainment for ministers at the installment of the Rev. Mr. Moor and bring in his charge to the town.”

The earlier records of the corporate meetings of the town, both annual and special, abound in entries of kindred character, touching the affairs of the church, showing that for many years the business of the town and temporalities of the church were equally regarded as matters of the same general and common concern. That there was anything improper in the union seems not to have been suggested. Those interested in the town were not less interested in the church. The supporters of the one included the supporters of the other, — woven together in harmony and apparently without seam, by those of one faith and mind, the two grew and expanded as associated interests, without rent or discord. In all this, there was no offence to conscience or disregard of the voluntary principle so long as there were none to be aggrieved, and all continued of the same mind. In the process of time, as other religious elements were introduced and a sister church of different denominational faith came to be organized, the practice alluded to yielded to the changed relations of the people. In connection with the pulpit of the Presbyterian society, it remains only to be added, that in May, 1805, Mr. Bradford, whose life has already passed into history, commenced his public labors as a candidate, and on the 26th of February, 1806, was ordained and installed as the successor of Mr. Moor.

The Baptist church and society was organized in Nov., 1799, and in 1804 took the name of "The Calvinistic Baptist Church in New Boston." Its first house of worship was erected in 1805, in the westerly part of the town, a distance of about three miles from the lower village, where its present church edifice is located. The first settled minister was the Rev. Isaiah Stone. He commenced his labors with the church in 1801, and on the 8th of January, 1806, was installed as its pastor. His installation, as will be seen, was the same year and a few weeks earlier than that of Mr. Bradford. He continued his pastoral relations until 1824, and was succeeded by your distinguished townsman, the Rev. John Atwood, afterwards and for many years honorably occupied with the duties of public life in the department of politics.

It would seem to have been the intention of the proprietors of New Boston at an early period to build up a centre of trade and population on "the plains" in the north easterly quarter of the township. The reasons which induced this contemplated enterprise are now only conjectural. Whatever they may have been, the plan of erecting a meeting house and group of dwellings in that neighborhood was actually undertaken and partially executed as early as 1740. We find the subject of completing the meeting house specified as one of the objects of a meeting of the proprietors called for the 15th of May, 1751, and after an interval of more than ten years. The uncompleted structure, however, was never finished or used as a place of worship. It was soon found that a location so remote from the geographical centre of the town was unfavorable to the settlement of the whole grant, and the enterprise was abandoned. Of this attempted settlement little more is known. Whether the buildings, supposed to have been some sixty in number, none of which appear ever to have been either completed or occupied, were left to decay

upon the spot where they were hastily thrown together, or were consumed by fire, or wholly or partially removed for use elsewhere, or what were the motives which originally prompted the undertaking other than to save a possible forfeiture by forcing a technical compliance with the three years limitation of the grant, are questions to which no satisfactory answers can be made, and in reference to which no certain trace or reliable tradition remains.

The first church edifice built in town, used as a place of public worship, was the one to which allusion has been made in a previous connection, and known since the erection of the new structure in 1823 as the "old meeting house." It stood on the northern slope of the hill and overlooking the river valley, a few rods south and above the burying ground. It was built by Ebenezer Beard, under contract with the proprietors, by whom the plan and specifications were furnished. It was begun as early as 1764, and completed in July or August 1767, and about the time the call to Mr. Moor bears date.

The commencement of the work was greatly delayed in consequence of difficulty or indecision with reference to the question of location. Becoming satisfied from the report of the committee of visitation, in 1756, that the "settlements" would prove a success, the proprietors proceeded immediately to appoint a committee with instructions "to fix on a place in or near the centre of the town, for the public worship of God; and also, for a public burying place, as they shall think most suitable, for the *whole* community."

The only record left to us of the action of this committee is comprehended in the brief entry: "*Fixed on lot 81.*" This lot embraced Buxton Hill, an eminence on the north side of the river, corresponding to that on the south, upon which the site was afterwards located, and is supposed to have been the place selected. No action appears

to have been taken on the report of this committee, if indeed any formal report was ever submitted, and the question still remained an open one. In 1762, a more successful effort was made. The proprietors, for the convenience of the inhabitants, and in order to secure greater facilities for general consultation and interchange of views, held a meeting at the house of Thomas Cochran, and appointed a new committee consisting of Matthew Patten, John Chamberlain and Samuel Patten, with directions "to select a spot for a meeting house, in the most convenient place, to build a meeting house or place of public worship thereon, and report as soon as possible." At this meeting Allen Moore, George Christy, John McAlister, James Hunter, Thomas Wilson, Thomas Cochran, and James Caldwell, residents of the town, are named as having been present and participating in its proceedings. In July following (1763), the committee having unanimously agreed upon a location, submitted their conclusions in writing, in which they state that "they had viewed several places and heard the reasonings of the proprietors and *inhabitants* of said town, and do report to the proprietors that the lot No. 79 in the second division and near the centre of the lot on the south side of the Piscataquog river, south of a red oak tree marked with the letter C, near *the grave of a child buried there*, is the most proper place or spot to build a meeting house on in town, according to our judgment."

The report was at once adopted, and the question of location settled accordingly; and in September, the same committee were further authorized to enter into contract on behalf of the proprietors, with "some suitable person, for building the meeting house already voted, as soon as may be." Thus, after repeated delays and disappointments, more or less inseparable from all new beginnings, the settlers were now able to look forward to a speedy

realization of what from the first they had steadily sought and devoutly wished, an appropriate house of public worship and a settled ministry.

That portion of the present graveyard, first used as a burial ground, was set apart for that purpose about the date at which the church site was fixed upon. The southerly bounds were run so as to include the new made grave mentioned in the committee's report, thus making it *the first* within the sacred inclosure. Whose was next is not known or now ascertainable. The earliest inscription is that on the stone erected to the memory of the first town clerk, Mr. Alexander McCollum, and bears date in 1768.

As connected with our own early history, and principally because it is our own, how interesting and suggestive is the allusion to that first little grave. The emotions excited are mingled with pleasurable sadness as well as awakened inquiry. Whence this child, its name, its age, its parentage, was not stated and is not known. Its story and its remains rest in a common silence, to be revealed together at the last. Though the tenant be nameless, the tenement has a history which will be read with interest by generations coming after us.

The "red oak marked with the letter C" as a monument of location, stood where the old south gate of the yard was situated, and the raised sod which was "near" points the spot, in the bosom of that ample slope, where now "heaves the earth in many a mouldering heap," first disturbed to sepulchre our dead. The site for the burial place was well chosen; commanding a view of both villages, the river and the prospect beyond, and capable of indefinite extension, it possesses rare natural advantages for the uses to which it has been consecrated. Within our recollection, it has been much enlarged and improved, and with a growth of ornamental trees spreading their green drapery over the bare surface and the naked marble,

and bringing with them the melody of birds and all the grateful and varied charms of the grove, it would become the most delightful as it is now the most sacred feature of the town.

The early records of the township disclose an isolated instance relating to the legal modes formerly observed in making delivery of lands, which deserves mention. In 1756, certain lots were forfeited by the action of the proprietors for failure on the part of purchasers to fulfill the conditions of their several agreements. At a meeting of the proprietors, William McNeil and Thomas Cochran, Jr., of New Boston, and William Gibson, of Litchfield, were constituted a committee to make delivery, by "turf and twidge," of the forfeited lands, to Thomas Cochran, Sen., acting for the proprietors. This ancient ceremony was actually gone through with, and has this explanation. In the transfer of real property under the feudal laws of Great Britain, investiture of title, or livery of seizen as it was called, was made by the parties going upon the land, and the feoffer (grantor) delivering to the feoffee (grantee) "the ring of the door or turf or twig of the land," in the name of the whole. This mode of delivery has long since gone into disuse; the simple delivery of the deed or conveyance being all that is necessary in order to invest the title.

In attempting within the limits imposed by the proprieties of the occasion, a historical sketch of the township, little more could be done than to present a mere outline of principal events, and afford here and there an occasional glance into its interior life. To me, personally, the task, though undertaken with some disadvantages, has been a pleasant one, and I only regret that it has not been better and more thoroughly performed. For the honor done me by the generous assignment of this duty, my warmest thanks are due and these are given.

The point of interest with us, as with you, has been the early settlers, the events they shaped, the ends at which they aimed, the obstacles overcome and the results they accomplished. To these fathers of the town we owe a deep debt of gratitude, and it was fitting that we should recognize it in this united and public manner. They were, indeed, men of no ordinary mould—men, in whom was united that relative measure of faith and works, of purpose and action by which victories, whether of war or peace, are compelled. While profoundly acknowledging a superintending providence to which all human instrumentalities were subordinate, they recognized in the right and resolute use of their own powers, the appointed means for carrying forward the enterprises and securing the purposes of life. With such, success depends upon no other conditions—against such, no fancied lions hold the way—with such, there can be no failure—failure itself is victory. If such were our fathers, our mothers were not less equal to the demands of the situation. These, content with their rugged lot, shared the cares and toils of their husbands, and in the spirit of true female heroism met and overcame the numberless privations and severities which pertained to life in the new settlements. Superior to every trial, and armed for any extremes of fortune, they present in their lives noble models for the imitation of American mothers. Like the virtuous woman of the sacred proverb, whose price is estimated above rubies :

They sought wool and flax, and worked willingly with their hands.

They rose also while it was yet night, and gave meat to their households, and a portion to their maidens.

They laid their hands to the spindle, and their hands held the distaff.

They stretched out their hands to the poor, and reached forth their hands to the needy.

They were not afraid of the snow for their households, "knowing their households were clothed with the scarlet cloth of their weaving."

They made fine linen and sold it. Strength and honor were their clothing.

They opened their mouths with wisdom, and in their tongues was the law of kindness.

They looked well to the ways of their households, and ate not the bread of idleness; and their children, as we do this day, rose up and called them blessed.

Said the settlers in their invitation to Mr. Moor, "from a very small, in a few years, we are increased to a considerable number, and the wilderness by God's kind influences, in many places amongst us, has become a beautiful field affording us a comfortable maintainance." While this is the language of humble dependence, it is also the language of appropriate congratulation, of conscious success and Christian self-reliance. In scarcely more than a quarter of a century from the time the first clearing was opened to the sun, individuals had united into families, and families into neighborhoods, and neighborhoods into a stable and flourishing community. The triumphs of associated industry and enterprise were visible on every hand, and their extent and rapid achievement attested the qualities of the race from which the fathers and mothers of New Boston sprang. Flocks grazed in abundant pastures, the orchard bloomed in its season, the red clover scented the summer air, fields of yellow grain nodded in the harvest winds, the wren, sweet bird of rural peace, from her perch by the farm house welcomed the dawn with joyous song, and the robin, following the abodes of cultivated life, poured forth her evening carol to the setting sun. With these evi-

dences of prosperity and contentment came the "New England Sabbath," with its calm stillness, its faithful lessons, and sacred solemnities, proclaiming the presence of a devout colony already rejoicing in the more precious institutions of a Christian civilization, and looking forward to a posterity to whom they might safely commit the keeping of their faith and their inheritance.

Did time permit, it would be alike pleasant and instructive to enter upon a brief review of the scenes of toil and activity, as well as some of the more stirring events of local and public interest, which attended the growth and development of this people, but we may not trespass farther upon your generous forbearance.

This centennial occasion, with its pleasures and duties, hastens to a conclusion, and in a few brief hours will be numbered among the events of the past. Soon we shall again separate, and in our allotted places and various callings resume the journey and burdens of life, and while all which we shall accomplish in what remains of mortal activity will be less than a unit in the grand summary of events which shall complete the measure of the coming century, the transactions of to-day, it may be reasonably hoped, will live on and live after us. The history we indite as a tribute of gratitude to the past we leave as an offering to the future. Though the gift be unpretending, it will be eagerly accepted and gratefully cherished by every true son of the soil, whatever fortunes betide him and wherever he may make his later home.

Time, measured by the changes wrought upon us and and ours, is remorseless and fleeting. Individuals die and are forgotten, and brevity and mutability are written upon all that is outward and personal in human life. On the world's broad stage, both the scenes and actors are constantly shifting, but upon the great drama the curtain never falls. What, though amid the revolution of the centuries



generations come and go, and peace and war follow each other in protracted alternation; what though continents are now calm and now convulsed, and the armies of light and darkness seem to wage uncertain conflict; what though storms assail the noblest fabrics of social wisdom, and at times comes "the winter of our discontent," in which the greenest leafage of our moral summer may fade and fall — the race, with all its transcendant interests and hopes, untouched in its life and unity, shall remain firm in its destiny, and the cause of truth, working out a full and free civilization, will move steadily onward, however thrones may crumble and empires perish, until the nations of mankind, perfected through discipline and trial, shall pass at length into the tranquil glories of the promised millennium.

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